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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2009

Media Highlights

PM Erdogan White House Visit Punctuated by Afghanistan
CNNTurk, NTV TV and all media reported PM Erdogan's 12/6 comments en route to Washington for a critical meeting with President Obama that "Turkey has sent enough troops to Afghanistan" but is willing to broaden training of the Afghani police. Mainstream Sabah headlines "We Won't Fight" and quotes PM Erdogan as saying "Turkish troops will not be involved in fighting in Afghanistan. We will support Afghanistan by training its soldiers and by helping to re-construct its infrastructure." Mainstream Hurriyet headlines "We Will Train and Give Financial Aid" and says PM Erdogan emphasized that Turkey has already contributed more than \$150 million, is willing to add another \$50 million and "if you ask what we can do beyond that, we can provide training there for the Afghan security forces, which so far we've been doing in our country." The PM also noted that "our troops in Afghanistan are combat forces. That is how they are named because they are equipped as combat troops." Separately, mainstream Hurriyet on Line's Zeynep Gurganli reported that the US wants training to be done in Afghanistan, rather than Turkey, with one Turkish trainer assigned to every Afghan unit. On 12/6, Islamist-oriented Zaman notes "In White House Views Erdogan With Concern" that "Turkey's unwillingness to change the parameters of its mission in Afghanistan despite an official US request for the contribution of further troops and more flexibility on the Afghanistan mission are likely to be the largest topics dealt with" in the 12/7 Obama-Erdogan meeting. On 12/7, Zaman also reported that in addition to Iran, Erdogan will deliver three other critical messages: that Turkey is ready to update its Iraq policies but that the Makhmur camp must be evacuated as the PKK is a common enemy of Turkey, Iraq and the US; that Turkey has no disagreements with the US over Iran; and that Turkey is ready to mediate between Israel and Syria as desired by the parties involved.

Erdogan-Obama: Turkish Pundits Say Washington Wants "Fast Steps"
In mass appeal Sabah, Omer Taspinar comments: "The fact that he has defined an exit strategy from Afghanistan by 2011 strengthens President Obama's hand for bargaining on the question. Washington, therefore, could ask from NATO allies including Turkey to send combat troops to Afghanistan for just one year. Washington can ask from Turkey to train more Afghan police and soldiers, as well as

increase its contribution to Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT). Washington expects Turkey to take fast steps on Afghanistan, Iran and Armenia. Otherwise, debates over whether Turkey is shifting axis or not will unnecessarily continue in the US capital. Washington will take Turkey's thesis more seriously if Ankara displays a flexible stance on Afghanistan."

In Islamist-oriented Zaman, Ali Aslan observes: "It's clear that the top agenda item in today's meeting between President Obama and Prime Minister Erdogan will be Iran. Obama will tell Erdogan that Washington would like to see Turkey on its side if more sanctions are applied on Tehran. In general, the US Administration finds Turkey's efforts of 'good cop' in dealings with Iran as positive. Doubts, however, increased over the extremely close picture the two countries have recently been giving. Erdogan, who is to address three forums in Washington, must carefully balance its messages on Iran as well as on Sudan and al-Bashir. The widespread opinion in the US is that Ankara went beyond engagement with some anti-Western oppressive regimes, and protects them. With regard to Armenia, Erdogan will ask Obama to push the Minsk Group to speed up work for progress in the Karabakh question. On Afghanistan, the Obama Administration is expected to insist on additional Turkish troops be deployed in high-risk areas. In sum, the Obama-Erdogan summit is expected to happen as a routine business meeting, there's no need for extreme excitement."

In mass appeal Milliyet, Kadri Gursel writes: "One high-risk topic in today's Obama-Erdogan meeting is what the AK Party government would do in case the issue of additional sanctions on Iran is raised in the talks." Noting recent comments in Turkey by US Congressman

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Robert Wexler, Gursel opines that, for Washington, the most discomfoting element of Turkey's foreign policy inclination is Ankara's stance regarding Iran and that the GoT "disregards Iran's support to terror, its destructive rhetoric and nuclear weapons program, and thus is moving away from impartiality and consistency."

Climate Change: Looking for A Cure

As the UN Climate Change Conference starts in Copenhagen, Turkish media warn that this is the world's last chance to save the planet from global warming. Hurriyet Daily News participated in a common editorial on climate change with 56 other daily papers in 45 countries, calling for global action. Liberal Radikal, in a front page headline writes, "World's Hope is Copenhagen," saying "thousands of specialists will seek ways to reduce the fever the world is suffering from global warming." The paper also notes, "President Obama will be at the Copenhagen summit and the US is planning a proposal to reduce emissions from greenhouse gases." Mainstream Sabah headline reads "Last Hope: Copenhagen," and says, "the climate summit will bring almost 130 world leaders and the US, China, India and Brazil will be represented on a presidential level. In "Last 10 Years for Humanity," mainstream Milliyet opines, "the Copenhagen summit raises hopes for a binding agreement," while Milliyet Blog emphasizes "Turkey is in danger from climate change." CNNTurk on-line headlines "History's Largest Climate Meeting" saying environmentalist and politicians will have only 2 weeks to work on the pressing issues. CNNTurk notes that President Obama will attend and that with assurances from leaders of pollution generating countries, such as China, the US, Russia and India, the chances of a greenhouse gas reduction agreement have increased.

Obama Letter to Armenian Organizations

Liberal Radikal and main stream Hurriyet report that in a letter to four Armenian organizations in the US prior to the visit of PM Erdogan, US President Obama said that he continues his support for the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia and expressed belief that the historical rapprochement would be for the advantage of both of the countries in the future. Both papers note that Obama pledged during his election campaign to categorize the killings as genocide if elected president but has since moved to support reconciliation. "Regarding the past, I deeply appreciate your views on what is one of the great atrocities of the 20th century," Radikal quotes Obama in the letters "as I said in my remembrance day message, my view of that history has not changed."

PKK Tensions Escalate, One Dead in Diyarbakir Protest

Today's papers widely cover the clashes that erupted between the security forces and supporters of the PKK in Diyarbakir, Siirt, Batman, Mardin, Hakkari, Agri and Istanbul over the weekend and note. Aksam notes that PM Erdogan, before departing Turkey for Washington on 12/6 was "infuriated" by recent DTP comments, such as DTP Leader Emine Ayna who announced that the transfer of Ocalan to a new cell "marked the end of the government's [democratic] opening." Taraf reports that 5,000 people attempted to stage illegal protest in support of Ocalan in Diyarbakir and that protestors threw fire bombs, stones and fire-works at security forces and the security forces, in response, used teargas to disperse them. Mainstream Vatan reports that a 23-year old university student was killed by a stray bullet during the violent protests in Diyarbakir. Cumhuriyet notes the support of DTP deputies and the Diyarbakir mayor gave for the protests while mass appeal Sabah reports that 99 DTP members will be investigated with 11 DTPers arrested in Istanbul. Meanwhile, the Firat News Agency headlines on its website that "Rancor Spreads in Waves in Southeast" and alleges that police intervention has been brutal with "hundreds of people reported wounded" in Diyarbakir. Hurriyet On Line showcases the image of youth attacking AKP Semdinli headquarters in its report. In a related story, mainstream Hurriyet reports that the GoT, citing the "very busy agenda of the parliament" will postpone the deliberations on the draft law that would envisage alleviated penalties against

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minors hurling stones at law enforcement officials in illegal demonstrations. It is also noted the delay in the visit of members of CPT (European Committee to Prevent Torture) delegation, who will come to visit the prison in January, is because of the nearing New Year Holiday plus a delay in official correspondence.

Retired Military Commanders Interrogated for 10 Hours

Weekend papers and TV channels and today's papers reported that former commanders were interrogated under the Ergenekon probe by the prosecutors for 10 hours. Former Land Forces Commander Aytac Yalman, former Naval Forces Commander Ozden Ornek and former Air Forces Commander Ibrahim Firtina were questioned about the coup conspiracy mentioned in a diary attributed to Admiral Ornek. The commanders rejected the allegations for plotting a coup and forming an outlawed armed organization. Sabah notes that the commanders were set free after the interrogation and quotes acting chief prosecutor Turan Colakkadi who questioned the commanders as saying "We released the retired generals since there was no risk of escape and low possibility of obfuscating the evidences.

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- DTP activists rallied in Istanbul to denounce government's democratic opening policy
- Diyarbakir prosecutor initiates investigation in connection with a press statement, which criticized PKK leader Ocalan's prison conditions, issued by 99 mayors from DTP and ten other party activists
- One worker is killed at a work accident in Tuzla shipyard
- Serap Eser, who was seriously injured when PKK supporters threw a fire bomb at a public bus in Istanbul 28 days ago, died this morning

World

- US Defense Secretary Robert Gates says it has been years since the United States had good intelligence on the whereabouts of Osama Bin Laden
- Clashes broke out between police and protesters marking the anniversary of a fatal shooting of a 15 year old boy in Athens. 162

people were taken into custody.
SILLIMAN